

Remember...Support Augusta's downtown merchants during the Memorial Bridge reconstruction.

Augusta Memorial Bridge Project

September 2005

Building a Better Future Through a Stronger Memorial Bridge



Additional parking in place for the holiday season

MaineDOT and the City of Augusta have been working together to ensure adequate parking for downtown shoppers and workers now, and during the full closure of the Augusta Memorial Bridge. Work is now underway to create 65 additional parking spaces on the rail bed between the Kennebec River and Gage Street. The direction of the current spaces there will change so parked vehicles will exit toward the bridge and then turn to ultimately flow onto Water Street in front of the Maine State Housing Authority. These spaces will be available before the fast-approaching holiday shopping season. New lighting will be installed for the safety of evening shoppers including lighting to further illuminate the existing rail bed parking behind Macomber, Farr & Whitten Insurance and adjacent to the city block that houses Beale Street Barbeque.

From mid-February to mid-May, when Memorial Bridge is fully closed, diagonal parking spaces on Commercial Street will become parallel to allow for an additional lane of traffic.

Some short-term spaces behind the Key Bank building will be moved up to the old railroad bed spaces above and parallel to Commercial Street. The eliminated short-term spaces directly behind Key Bank will create more room for traffic turning onto Winthrop Street. Because this change will occur after the peak shopping season, it is hoped that the impact of temporary loss of spaces on Commercial Street will be minimized.

Motorists and residents taking a second look at security fence

The security fence that lined the Augusta Memorial Bridge was recently taken down to facilitate the re-decking work. This has sparked renewed public debate about the need for the security fence which was installed in 1982, 33 years after the bridge was built. Many motorists have stopped and commented to crews working on the bridge about the beautiful view. Augusta City Hall and City Councilors have also heard from residents who don't want the security fence re-installed because it compromises the vistas from the bridge.

In October 2004, the City of Augusta held informational meetings to get input on the security fence issue. Advocates for those with mental illness support the security fence as a deterrent to those considering suicide,



This design is shown in silver (galvanized) and would cost approximately \$500,000. The same design in black would cost approximately \$590,000.



This black chain link fence would cost approximately \$350,000.

especially considering its location next to Riverview Psychiatric Hospital. As a result of that feedback, the Council voted to support replacement of the fence and form a Committee to research more attractive alternatives.

At the same time, the Capital Riverfront Improvement District (CRID) Governing Board forwarded a letter to MaineDOT recommending that aesthetic and public art considerations be part of the final design for the bridge details. Kathy Fuller, Co-Chair of the CRID and Director of MaineDOT's Environmental Office met with City Manager Bridgeo, also a member of the CRID, and together they recommended the following people serve on a Committee to focus on these issues:

- Lionel Cayer, Augusta City Engineer
- Sylvia Lund, Augusta City Council
- Kirk Mohny, Maine Historic Preservation Commission
- Donna McNeil, Maine Arts Commission
- Kent Cooper, MaineDOT who has worked with bridge & village enhancement issues.
- Wayne Frankhauser, MaineDOT Project Manager

This Committee met several times and narrowed down its choices. They then requested that MaineDOT fabricate a few alternatives which are currently displayed on the riverfront by Fort Western. The Committee has not selected an option as yet, and would welcome public comment.



MaineDOT doesn't want to rush the decision on the fence since it is a costly project with current alternatives ranging from \$350,000 to \$590,000. MaineDOT budgeted \$250,000 which would cover the cost of replacing the security fence exactly as it was galvanized chain link. MaineDOT postponed putting the fencing out to bid since a selection has not yet been made, resources need to be identified to cover the additional expense of the alternatives selected by the committee, and because of the recently renewed debate.

Please take a look at the examples of fence replacements at Fort Western and also at the current view from the bridge and then contact your city councilor, state legislator, or submit your comments by going to the MaineDOT website: www.maine.dot.gov. Photos of the fencing options are also on the website.

To sign-up for email alerts on the August Memorial Bridge Project or for more information visit: www.mainedot.gov

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Bridge work requires special safety precautions

Though you can't miss seeing the hardhats and bright orange vests, many other safety tools are being used by workers on the Augusta Memorial Bridge. Bridge contractor, CPM, often goes above and beyond the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) requirements. For instance, just below the level of the roadway, there is a suspended work platform that runs the entire length of the bridge. This platform serves as a fall prevention measure for those working on the bridge deck. As an added safety precaution, CPM has installed a cable lifeline to which workers, using harnesses, are always attached.

Please Save the Date!

Help plan Maine's transportation future by attending a forum in your area. For the past year, the Maine Department of Transportation and Maine's Regional Planning Organizations have been assessing transportation needs in order to plan for the future of transportation in Maine.

At the forums, we'll share highlights from these regional "Transportation Assessments"—as well as some of the economic, demographic, and technological trends shaping Maine's future. Together, with your insights and opinions, Maine can create a 20-Year Plan that will set the course of our transportation policy for decades to come.

All forums run from 9:00 am – 2:30 pm and include lunch. Pre-registration is required.

Eastern Maine...
Tuesday, October 4 Carter Banquet Center, Machias

Western Maine...
Wednesday, October 12 LaFleur's Restaurant, Jay

Northern Maine...
Tuesday, October 18 Presque Isle Inn, Presque Isle

Mid-Coast Maine...
Wednesday, October 26 VFW Hall, Waldoboro

Southern Maine...
Thursday, October 27 Town Hall, Scarborough

Central Maine...
Tuesday, November 1 John Martin's Manor, Waterville

Eastern Maine...
Wednesday, Nov 2 Black Bear Inn, Orono

Visit www.mainedot.gov to learn more and to download a registration form, or call 1-800-380-7822 for more information

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www.mainedot.gov
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